THE MEMOIRES OF Monsieur Du Vall:

CONTAINING THE

HISTORY

OF HIS

LIFE and DEATH

Whereunto are Annexed

His last Speech and Epitaph.

by W. Walter Pope

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Solventur risu tabulæ.——
Horat.

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Printed for *Henry Brome*, at the Gun near the *West-End* of St. *Pauls*, 1670.

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THE LIFE and DEATH OF Claude Du Vall.

Claude Du Vall was born *Anno* 1643. at *Domfront* in *Normandy*, a place very Famous for the Excellency and Healthfulneſs of the Air, and for the Production of *Mercurial Wits*: at the time of his Birth (as we have ſince found by Rectification of his Nativity by Accidents) there was a Conjunction of *Venus* and *Mercury*, certain Preſages of very good Fortune, but of a ſhort Continuance. His Father was *Pierre Du Vall* a Miller, his Mother *Marguerite de la Roche* a Tailors Daughter. I hear no hurt of his Parents, they lived in as much Reputation and Honeſty, as their Conditions and Occupations would permit.

There are ſome that confidently averr he was born in *Smock-Ally* without *Biſhopſgate*; that his Father was a Cook, and ſold boil'd Beef and Portage: But this report is as falſe as it is defamatory and malicious; and 'tis eaſie

to disprove it several ways: I will only urge one Demonstrative Argument against it. If he had been born there he had been no *Frenchman*, but if he had not been a *Frenchman*, 'tis absolutely impossible he should have been so much beloved in his Life, and lamented at his Death by the *English* Ladies.

His Father and Mother had not been long married, when *Marguerite* long'd for Pudding and Mince-Pie, which the good Man was fain to beg for her at an *English* Merchants in *Rouen*: which was a certain sign of his inclination to *England*. They were very merry at his Christning, and his Father without any grumbling paid also then the Fees for his Burial, which is an extraordinary Custom at *Domfront*, not exercis'd any where else in all *France*, and of which I count my self obliged to give the Reader a particular Account.

In the days of *Charles* the ninth of that name, the Curate of *Domfront* (for so the *French* name him whom we call Parson and Vicar) out of his own head began a strange Innovation and Oppression in that Parish; that is, he absolutely denied to baptize any of their Children, if they would not at the same time pay him also the Funeral Fees; and, what was worse, he would give them no reason for this alteration, but only promised to enter Bond for himself and his Successors, that hereafter all persons paying so at their Christning, should be buried *gratis*: What think ye the poor people did in this case? they did not pull his *Surplice* over his *Ears*, nor *tear* his *Mass-Book*, nor throw *Crickets* at his *head*; no, they humbly desired him to alter his Resolution, and amicably reasoned it with him; but he being a capricious fellow gave them no other answer, but, What I have done, I have done: take your Remedy where you can find it, 'tis not for men of

my

my *Coat* to give an Account of my Actions to the *Laity*. Which was a ſurly and quarrelſome Anſwer, and unbefitting a Prieſt. Yet this did not provoke his Pariſhioners to ſpeak one ill word againſt his Perſon or Function, or to do any illegal Act. They only took the regular way of complaining of him to his Ordinary, the Archbiſhop of *Rouen*. Upon Summons he appears, the Archbiſhop takes him up roundly, tells him he deſerves deprivation, if that can be proved which is objected againſt him, and asks him, What he has to ſay for himſelf? After his due reverence, he anſwers, that he acknowledges the Fact, to ſave the time of examining Witneſſes, but deſires his Grace to hear his Reaſons, and then do unto him as he ſhall ſee cauſe. I have been, ſaies he, Curate of this Pariſh theſe ſeven years, in that time I have one year with another baptized a hundred Children, and buried not one. At firſt I rejoyced at my good Fortune to be placed in ſo good an air: But looking into the Regiſter Book I found for a hundred years back near the ſame Number yearly baptiz'd, and not one above five year old buried. And, which did more amaze me, I find the number of the Communicants to be no greater now than they were then: this ſeem'd to me a great myſtery, but upon further inquiry I found out the true cauſe of it, for all that are born at *Domfront* were hanged at *Rouen*. I did this to keep my Pariſhioners from hanging, incouraging them to die at home, the burial duties being already paid.

The Archbiſhop demanded of the Pariſhioners, Whether this was true or not? they anſwered, that too many of them came to that unlucky end at *Rouen*. Well then, ſaid he, I approve of what the Curate has done, and will cauſe my Secretary in *perpetuam Rei Memoriam* to make an Act of

it; which Act the Curate carried home with him, and the Parish cheerfully submitted to it, and have found much good by it; for within less than twenty years there died fifteen of natural Deaths, and now there die three or four yearly.

But to return to *Du Vall*, 'twill not I hope be expected that I should in a true History, play the Romancer, and describe all his Actions from his Cradle to his Saddle, telling what childish Sports he was best at, and who were his play-fellows; that were enough to make the Truth of the whole Narration suspected, only one important Accident I ought not to omit.

An old Frier, counted very expert in Physiognomy and Judicial Astrology, came on a time to see *Pierre du Vall* and his Wife, who had then by extraordinary good Fortune some *Norman* Wine, that is, Cider in their house, of which they were very liberal to this old Frier, whom they made heartily welcome, thinking nothing too good for him.

For those silly people, who know no better, count it a great honour and favour, when any Religious Person, as a Priest or Frier are pleas'd to give them a visit, and to eat and drink with them. As these three were sitting by the fire, and chirping over their Cups, in comes *Claude*, and broke the Friers Draught, who fix'd his eyes attentively upon him, witout speaking one word for the space of half an hour, to the amazement of *Claude*'s Parents, who seeing the Frier neither speak nor drink, imagined he was sick, and courteously askt him, Brother, what ails you? are you not well? why do you so look upon our Son? The Frier having rous'd himself out of his Ecstasie, Is that Stripling, saies he, your Son? to which after they had replied, Yes: Come hither Boy, quoth he,

he, and looking upon his head, he perceived he had two Crowns, a certain ſign that he ſhould be a Traveller ‖ This Child, ſaies he, will be a Traveller, and he ſha never during his life, be long without money; and where ever he goes, he will be in extraordinary favour with Wo men of the higheſt Condition. Now from this Story, the certainty of Phyſiognomy and Judicial Aſtrology is evidently proved, ſo that from henceforward, whoever ſhall preſume to deny it, ought not to be eſteemed a perſon in his right Wits.

Pierre and *Marguerite* look'd upon the Frier as an Oracle, and mightily rejoyced at their Sons Fortune; but it could not enter into their imagination, how this ſhould come to paſs, having nothing to leave him as a Foundation to build ſo great a Structure upon.

The Boy grew up, and ſpoke the Language of the Country fluently, which is, *Lawyers French*; and which (if I ſhould not offend the Ladies in comparing our Language with theirs) is as much inferiour to that at *Paris*, as *Devonſhire* or *Somerſetſhire* Engliſh to that ſpoken at *white-hall*.

I ſpeak not this to diſgrace him, for could he have ſpoke never ſo good *French*, it is not in ſuch high eſteem there as it is here; and it very rarely happens that, upon that account alone, any great mans Daughter runs away with a Lacquey.

When he was about thirteen or fourteen years old, his Friends muſter'd their forces together to ſet him up in the World, they bought him ſhoos and ſtockins, for (according to the laudable Cuſtom of that Country of inuring their Youth to hardſhip) till then he had never worn any; they alſo bought him a Suit of the Brokers, gave him their Bleſſing, and twenty *Sous* in his Pocket, and threw an

old

old shoo after him, and bid him go seek his fortune: This throwing of an old shoo after him was looked upon as a great piece of *Prodigality* in *Normandy*, where they are so considerable a *Merchandize*; the Citizens Wives of the best Quality wearing old shoos chalked; whence, I suppose, our Custom of wearing white shoos derives its Original.

His Friends advised him to go to *Paris*, assuring him he would not fail of a Condition there if any could be had in the *World*; for so the *French* call *Paris*. He goes to *Rouen*, and fortunately meets with Post-horses which were to be returned, one of which he was proffer'd to ride *gratis*, only upon promise to help to dress them at night: And, which was yet more fortunate, he meets several young *English* Gentlemen with their Governours going to *Paris*, to learn their Exercises to fit them to go a woing at their return home, who were infinitely ambitious of his Company, not doubting but in those two daies travels, they should *pump* many *considerable things* out of him, both as to the *Language* and *Customs* of *France*; and upon that account they did very willingly defray his Charges.

They arrive at *Paris*, and light in the *Fauxbourg* St. *Germain*, the Quarter wherein generally the *English* lodge, near whom also our *Du Vall* did earnestly desire to plant himself. Not long after by the intercession of some of the English Gentlemen (for in this time he had indear'd himself to them) he was admitted to run on errants, and do the meanest Offices at the St. *Esprit* in the *Rue de Boucherie*: A house in those daies betwixt a Tavern, and an Ale-house, a Cooks-shop and a Bawdy-house; and, upon some of those accounts much frequented by the English his Patrons. In this condition he lived un-

unblamably during some time, unless you esteem it a fault to be *scabby*, and a little given to *filching*, qualities very frequent in persons of his Nation and condition.

The Restauration of his Majesty, which was in 1660. brought multitudes of all Nations into *England*, to be spectators of our *Jubilee*; but more particularly it drein'd *Paris* of all the English there, as being most concern'd in so great a happiness. One of them, a person of Quality, entertained *Du Vall* as his Servant, and brought him over with him.

What fortunes he ran through afterwards, is known to every one, and how good a proficient he was in the laudable qualities of *Gaming* and *making Love*. But one Vice he had which I cannot pardon him, because 'tis not of the *French* growth, but *Northern* and ungenteele, I mean, that of drinking; for that very night he was *surpriz'd*, he was *overtaken*.

By these Courses (for I dare not call them Vices) he soon fell into want of Money to maintain his Port; That, and his Stars, but chiefly his own Valour, inclined him to take the Generous way of *Padding*; in which he quickly became so famous, that in a Proclamation, for the taking several notorious Highway-men, he had the *honour* to be named first.

This is the place where I should set down several of his Exploits, but I omit them, both as being well known, and because I cannot find in them more ingenuity than was practiz'd before by *Hind* and *Hannam*, and several other *meer English* Thieves.

Yet, to do him right, one Story there is that savours of Gallantry, and I should not be an honest Historian if I should conceal it.

He, with his Squadron, overtakes a Coach which they had ſet over night, having intelligence of a booty of Four Hundred Pounds in it: In the Coach was a *Knight*, his *Lady*, and only *one ſerving Maid*, who perceiving five Horſemen making up to them, preſently imagin'd that they were beſet, and they were confirmed in this apprehenſion, by ſeeing them whiſper to one another, and ride backwards and forwards: The Lady, to ſhew ſhe was not afraid, takes a Flageolet out of her pocket and plays; *Du Vall* takes the hint, plays alſo, and excellently well, upon a Flageolet of his own, and in this poſture he rides up to the Coach ſide. Sir, ſayes he, to the perſon in the Coach, your Lady playes excellently, and I doubt not but that ſhe Dances as well; will you pleaſe to walk out of the Coach, and let me have the honour to Dance one Corant with her upon the Heath? Sir, ſaid the perſon in the Coach, I dare not deny any thing to one of your Quality and good *Mine*; you ſeem a Gentleman, and your requeſt is very reaſonable: Which ſaid, the Lacquey opens the Boot, out comes the Knight, *Du Vall* leaps lightly off his Horſe, and hands the Lady out of the Coach. They Danc'd, and here it was that *Du Vall* performed marvels; the beſt Maſter in *London*, except thoſe that are *French* not being able to ſhew ſuch *footing* as he did in his great, riding *French* Boots. The Dancing being over, he waits on the Lady to her Coach; as the Knight was going in, ſayes *Du Vall* to him, Sir, You have forgot to pay the Muſick: No, I have not, replies the Knight, and putting his hand under the ſeat of the Coach, puls out a Hundred pounds in a bag, and delivers it to him: Which *Du Vall* took with a very good grace, and courteouſly anſwered, Sir, You are liberal, and ſhall have no cauſe to repent your being ſo; this liberality of yours ſhall excuſe you the

other Three Hundred Pounds; and giving him the word, that, if he met with any more of the Crew, he might pass undisturb'd, he civilly takes his leave of him.

This Story, I confess, justifies the great kindness the Ladies had for *Du Vall*; for in this, as in an Epitome, are contain'd all things that set off a man advantageously, and make him appear, as the phrase is, *much a Gentleman*. First, here was *Valour*, that he and but four more durst assault a *Knight*, a *Lady*, a *waiting Gentlewoman*, a *Lacquey*, a *Groom* that rid by to open the Gates, and the *Coach-man*, they being *Six* to *Five*, *odds* at *Foot ball*; and besides *Du Vall* had much the worse cause and reason to believe, that whoever should arrive, would range themselves on the Enemies party. Then he shewed his *Invention* and *Sagacity* that he could *sur le Champ*, and without studying, make that advantage of the Ladies playing on the Flageolet. He evidenced his *Skill in Instrumental Musick*, by playing on his Flageolet; in *Vocal* by his Singing; for, (as I should have told you before) there being no Violins, *Du Vall* sung the Corant himself. He manifested his *Agility of Body*, by lightly dismounting off his Horse, and with ease and freedom getting up again, when he took his leave, his *excellent Deportment* by his incomparable Dancing, and his graceful manner of taking the Hundred Pound; his *Generosity* in taking no more, his *Wit* and *Eloquence*, and *readiness at Reparties*, in the whole Discourse with the Knight and Lady, the greatest part of which I have been forced to omit.

And here (could I dispense with truth and impartiality, necessary Ingredients of a good History) I could come off with flying Colours, leave *Du Vall* in the Ladies *Bosomes*, and not put my self out of a

 possibi-

possibility of ever being in favour with any of them.

But I must tell the story of the *Sucking-Bottle*; which, if it seem to his disadvantage, set that other against it which I come from relating. The adventure of the *Sucking-Bottle* was as follows.

It happened another time, as *Du Vall* was upon his *Vocation* of Robbing, on *Black-Heath*, he meets with a Coach richly fraught with Ladies of Quality, and with one Child who had a Silver *Sucking-Bottle*; He robs them rudely, takes away their Money, Watches, Rings, and even the little Childs *Sucking-Bottle*: Nor would, upon the Childs tears, nor the Ladies earnest intercession, be wrought upon to restore it; till at last one of his Companions (whose Name I wish I could put down here, that he may find friends when he shall stand in need of them) a good natured person (for the *French* are strangers both to the name and thing) forced him to deliver it. I shall make no reflexions upon this story, both because I do not design to render him odious, or make this Pamphlet more prolix.

The noise of the Proclamation, and the Rewards promised to those who should take any therein named, made *Du Vall* retire to *France*. At *Paris* he lives highly, makes great boastings of the success of his Arms and Amours in *England*, proudly bragging, He could never incounter with any of either Sex that could resist him. He had not been long in *France*, but he had a fit of his old disease, Want of Money, which he found to be much augmented by the thin air of *France*; and therefore by the advice of his Physicians, lest the disease should *seise upon his Vitals*, and make him *lie by it*, he resolves to transport himself into *England*; which accordingly he did: For, in truth, the air of *France* is not good for persons of his

constitution,

conſtitution, it being the cuſtom there to Travel in great Companies well Armed, and with little Money; the danger of being reſiſted, and the danger of being Taken is much greater there; and the *Quarry* much leſſer than in *England*; For if by chance a Dapper Fellow with fine *black Eyes*, and a *white Peruke*, be taken there, and found guilty of Robbing, all the Women in the Town don't preſently take the Alarm, and run to the King to beg his life.

To *England* he comes, but alas! his Reign proves but ſhort; for, within few months after his return, before he had done any thing of great glory, or advantage to himſelf, he fell into the Hands of Juſtice, being taken Drunk at the Hole in the Wall in *Chandois-ſtreet*: And well it was for the Baily, and his men, that he was Drunk, otherwiſe they had taſted of his proweſs; for he had in his pocket three Piſtols, one whereof would ſhoot twice, and by his ſide an excellent Sword, which managed by ſuch a hand and heart, muſt without doubt have done wonders. Nay, I have heard it atteſted by thoſe that knew how good a Marks-man he was, and his excellent way of Fencing, that had he been Sober 'twas impoſſible he could have kill'd leſs than ten. They farther add, upon their own knowledge, he would have been cut as ſmall as herbs for the Pot, before he would have yielded to the Bayly of *Weſtminſter*; that is to ſay, he would have died in the place, had not ſome *Great perſon* been ſent to him to whom he might with *Honour* have delivered his *Sword* and *himſelf*. But taken he was, and that too *a bon Marche*, without the expenſe of blood or Treaſure, committed to *Newgate*, Arraigned, Convicted, Condemned, and on Friday *Jan.* 21. Executed at *Tiburn* in the 27th. year of his Age, (which number is

made up of three times nine) and left behind him a ſad inſtance of the irreſiſtible influence of the Stars, and the fatality of Climacterical years.

There were a great Company of Ladies, and thoſe not of the meaneſt Degree, that viſited him in Priſon, interceded for his Pardon, and accompanied him to the Gallows; a Catalogue of whoſe Names I have by me, nay, even of thoſe who when they viſited him, durſt not pull off their Vizours for fear of ſhewing their *Eyes ſwoln*, and their *Cheeks blubber'd* with *Tears*.

When I firſt put Pen to Paper, I was in great indignation, and fully reſolved, nay, and I think I ſwore, that I would Print this Muſter-roll. But upon ſecond Thoughts, and calmer Conſiderations, I have alter'd my fierce Reſolution, partly, becauſe I would not do my Nation ſo great a Diſgrace, and eſpecially that part of it, to which I am ſo intirely devoted. But principally becauſe I hoped milder Phyſick might cure them of this *French Diſeaſe*, of this inordinate *Appetite* to *Muſhromes*, of this degenerous *Doting* upon *Strangers*.

After he had hang'd a convenient time, he was cut down, and by Perſons well dreſſ'd, carried into a Mourning Coach, and ſo conveyed to the *Tangier Tavern* in St. *Giles*'s, where he lay in State all that Night, the Room hung with black Cloth, the Hearſe cover'd with Scutcheons, eight Wax-Tapers burning, as many tall Gentlemen with long black Clokes attending; *Mum* was the word, great ſilence expected from all that viſited, for fear of diſturbing this ſleeping Lion: And this Ceremony had laſted much longer, had not one of the Judges (whoſe Name I muſt not mention here leſt he

he ſhould incurr the diſpleaſure of the Ladies) ſent to diſturb this *Pageantry*. But I dare ſet down a mark, whereby you may gueſs at him; 'Tis one betwixt whom and the Highway-men there's little love loſt, one who thought the *Filou* lay in *State* enough in not being *buried* under the *Gallows*.

This ſtory of lying in State ſeem'd to me ſo improbable, and ſuch an audacious *mocquerie* of the Laws, that, till I had it *again* and *again* from ſeveral Gentlemen who had the curioſity to ſee him, I durſt not put it down here for fear of being accounted a *notorious Lyer*.

The night was ſtormy and rainy, as if the Heavens had ſympathiz'd with the Ladies, and *ecchoed* again their *Sighs*, and *wept* over again their *Tears*.

As they were undreſſing him, in order to his lying in State, one of his Friends put his hands in his pocket, and found therein the Speech which he intended to have made, written with a very fair hand; a Copy whereof (though I have with much coſt and induſtry procured) I do freely make it publick, becauſe I would not have any thing wanting in this Narration.

DU VALL's

SPEECH.

I Should be very ungrateful (which amongst Persons of Honour, is a greater Crime than that for which I die) should I not acknowledge my Obligation to you, fair *English* Ladies. I could not have hoped that a Person of my *Nation*, *Birth*, *Education*, and *Condition*, could have had so many and powerful *Charms*, to *captivate* you all, and to tie you so firmly to my interest; that you have not abandon'd me in *distress*, or in *prison*, that you have accompanied me to this place of *Death*, of *Ignominious Death*.

From the Experience of your true *Loves* I speak it; nay I know I speak *your Hearts*, you could be content to die with *me now*, and even *here*, could you be assured of enjoying your beloved *Du Vall* in the other world.

How *mighily* and how *generously* have you rewarded my *little* Services? Shall I ever forget that *universal Consternation* amongst you when I was taken, your *frequent*, your *chargeable Visits* to me at *Newgate*, your *Shreeks*, your *Swoonings* when I was *Condemned*, your *zealous Intercession* and *Importunity* for my *Pardon*?

You could not have erected fairer Pillars of Honour and respect to me, had I been a *Hercules*, and could have got *fifty Sons* in a Night.

It

It has been the Misfortune of several *English* Gentlemen, in the times of the late Usurpation, to die at this place upon the *Honourableſt Occaſion* that ever *preſented* itſelf, the indeavouring to reſtore their *Exil'd Sovereign*: *Gentlemen* indeed, who had ventured their *Lives*, and loſt their *Eſtates* in the Service of their Prince; but they all died *unlamented* and *uninterceded* for, becauſe they were *Engliſh*. How much greater therefore is my Obligation, whom you love better than your own *Country-men*, better than your own *dear Husbands*? Nevertheleſs, Ladies, it does not grieve me, that your Interceſſion for my life prov'd ineffectual; For now I ſhall die with *little pain*, a *healthful body*, and I hope a *prepared mind*. For my Confeſſor has ſhewed me the Evil of my way, and wrought in me a true Repentance; witneſs theſe *tears*, theſe *unfeigned tears*. Had you prevail'd for my life, I muſt in gratitude have devoted it wholly to you, which yet would have been but ſhort; for, had you been found, I ſhould have ſoon died of a *Conſumption*; if otherwiſe, of the POX.

He was buried with many *Flambeaux*, and a numerous train of Mourners, moſt whereof were of the Beautiful Sex: He lies in the middle Ile in *Covent-Garden* Church under a plain white marble ſtone, whereon are curiouſly ingrav'd the *Du Valls* Arms, and under them written in black this Epitaph.

DU VALL's

EPITAPH.

HEre *lies* Du Vall: *Reader, if* Male *thou art,*
Look to thy Purſe; *if* Female, *to thy* Heart.
Much havock has he made of both: For all
Men *he made* ſtand, *and* Women *he made* fall.
The ſecond Conquerour of the Norman *Race,*
Knights *to his* Arms *did yield, and* Ladies *to his* Face:
Old Tiburn's *Glory,* England's *Illuſtrious Thief,*
Du Vall *the Ladies* Joy, Du Vall *the Ladies* Grief.